CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

Chandragupta Maurya defeated the Nandas and established himself on the throne of Magadha in 321 B.C. It was a journey fraught with dangerous challenges but his chance meeting with the wily Chanakya changed his destiny forever. The clever Brahmin showed him how by the sheer brilliance of his wit and wile he could help the young Mauryan prince to rise from being an unknown warrior to one of the greatest emperors of India.

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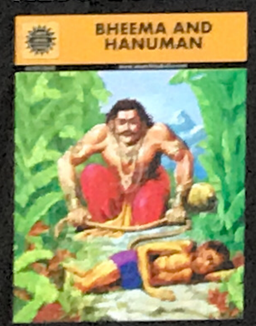

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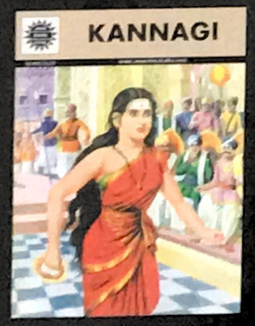

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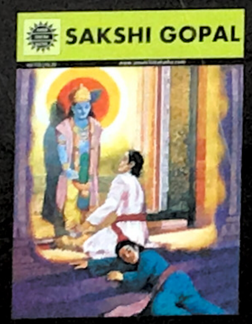

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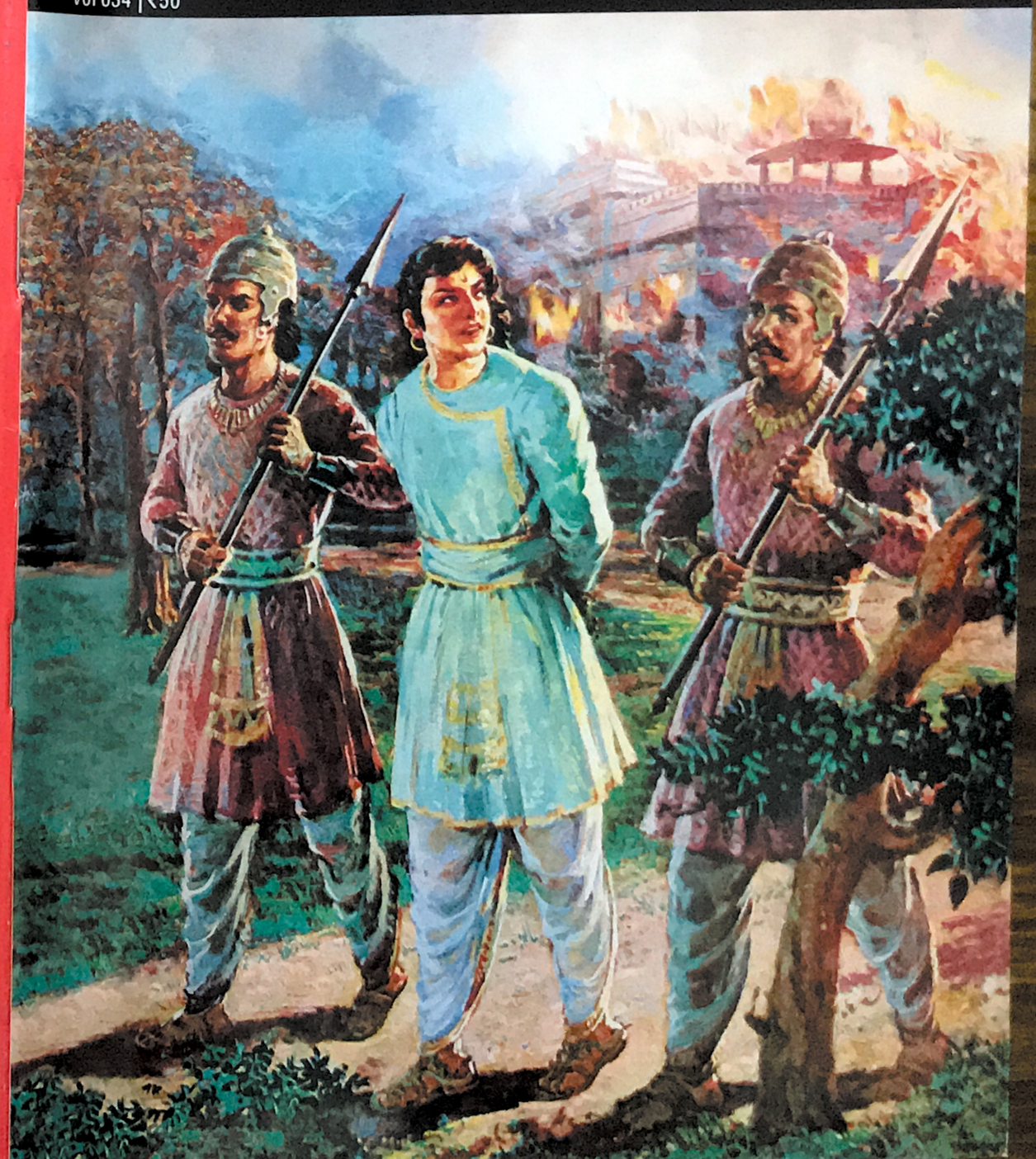


CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

CROWN PRINCE NANDA WAS THE VIRTUAL RULER OF MAGADHA BECAUSE SARVARTHA SIDDHI, ITS AGED KING, LED A RETIRED LIFE. THE CROWN PRINCE AND HIS EIGHT BROTHERS WERE TOGETHER KNOWN AS THE NANDAS.

THAT WAS THE BEST HUNT WE'VE EVER HAD.

ONLY BECAUSE WE DIDN'T INVITE OUR COUSIN, MAURYA, AND HIS HUNDRED SONS TO JOIN US!

NOT THAT NANDA DIDN'T KNOW IT!

WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE. WHEN THE MAURYAS ARE AROUND, THERE'S NOT AN ANIMAL LEFT FOR US TO SHOOT!

THE MAURYAS ARE POWERFUL, INTELLIGENT AND POPULAR. ONE DAY THEY WILL PROVE A THREAT TO US.

IF WE LET THEM LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO DO SO!

YOU MEAN, YOU WON'T ALLOW THEM TO... BUT HOW?

I HAVE MY PLANS. BUT I'M BIDING MY TIME.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, NANDA STOOD GAZING AT A SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED PALACE OUTSIDE PATALIPUTRA, THE CAPITAL.

NOW I'M READY FOR THEM. THE OLD KING WILL SOON BE GOING AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE. THEN SHALL I STRIKE!

AS SOON AS SARVARTHA SIDDHI WENT ON HIS PILGRIMAGE, NANDA CALLED ON MAURYA.

MAURYA, I'VE ARRANGED FOR A BIG HUNT IN THE FOREST TOMORROW. I WANT YOU AND YOUR VALIANT SONS TO JOIN US.

WE'D BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION.

OF ALL THE COURTIERS, NOBLES AND PRINCES WHO HAD JOINED THE PARTY, CHANDRAGUPTA, THE YOUNGEST OF THE MAURYAS, WAS AS USUAL EASILY THE BEST SHOT.

AFTER THE HUNT, WHEN NANDA BROUGHT HIS GUESTS TO THE NEWLY BUILT PALACE FOR DINNER, HE TURNED TO MAURYA.

THIS HAS BEEN SPECIALLY BUILT...

....FOR US?

YES.

FOR YOUR LAST SUPPER. I TRUST MY MEN HAVE MADE THE NECESSARY ARRANGE-MENTS.

AS SOON AS EVERYONE HAD ENTERED THE PALACE, NANDA CALLED MAURYA ASIDE.

I'VE JUST LEARNT THAT ALL OF US CANNOT EAT IN THE MAIN HALL. SOME WILL HAVE TO BE SERVED IN THE CELLAR. WHAT AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION!

DON'T WORRY. I'LL EAT WITH MY SONS IN THE CELLAR. OUR GUESTS SHOULD BE SERVED IN THE MAIN HALL.

MAURYA SPOKE TO HIS SONS AND THEY TROOPED INTO THE CELLAR.

SO FAR SO GOOD. HE DOESN'T SUSPECT A THING.

IN THE CELLAR, THE NANDAS MOVED ABOUT PRETENDING TO LEAD THEM TO THEIR SEATS. THEN—

NOW TO SLOWLY MAKE OUR WAY OUT OF THE CELLAR.

AS SOON AS THE NANDAS WERE OUT OF THE CELLAR—

BANG!

WHAT WAS THAT?

CHANDRAGUPTA RAN TOWARDS THE DOOR.

IT'S THE DOOR! OPEN THE DOOR!

YOU WILL NEVER COME OUT OF THIS PALACE ALIVE.

FATHER, WE HAVE BEEN TRICKED BY THE NANDAS AND THEIR HENCHMEN!

WHILE THE NANDAS AND THE NOBLES MADE FOR THE CAPITAL, THE MAURYAS STRUGGLED IN VAIN TO BREAK OPEN THE DOOR. DAYS PASSED BY.

WE ARE DOOMED.

ONE BY ONE THE MAURYAS BEGAN TO DIE OF STARVATION.

EVEN IF ONE OF US SURVIVES, HE SHALL TAKE REVENGE!

WITHOUT A DOUBT, FATHER!

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE GUARDS REPORTED TO NANDA.

YOUR MAJESTY, ALL THE PRISONERS EXCEPT ONE HAVE DIED. THE PLACE IS REEKING.

THE STENCH MAY ATTRACT ATTENTION.

AND ONE MAURYA CAN'T DO US MUCH HARM.

TRANSFER THE LONE PRISONER TO THE STATE PRISON AND BURN DOWN THE PALACE.

THE ORDER WAS CARRIED OUT. CHANDRAGUPTA, THE LONE SURVIVOR WAS LED AWAY TO THE STATE PRISON.

FATHER! BROTHERS! REST IN PEACE. I WILL AVENGE YOUR DEATH.

MEANWHILE, THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF THE MIGHTY MAURYAS HAD SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. KING PARVATAK OF PARVATA DESH WAS JUBILANT. HE SENT FOR HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

NOW THAT THE MIGHTY MAURYAS ARE NO MORE, THE WAY IS CLEAR FOR US TO MARCH INTO MAGADHA.

MY LORD, SHOULDN'T WE FIRST MAKE SURE THAT THE MAURYAS ARE REALLY DEAD?

YOU ARE RIGHT.

KAMALAPIDA SHALL GO TO PATALIPUTRA AND CREATE A SITUATION WHICH WILL COMPEL THE MAURYAS, IF ALIVE, TO COME OUT OF HIDING.

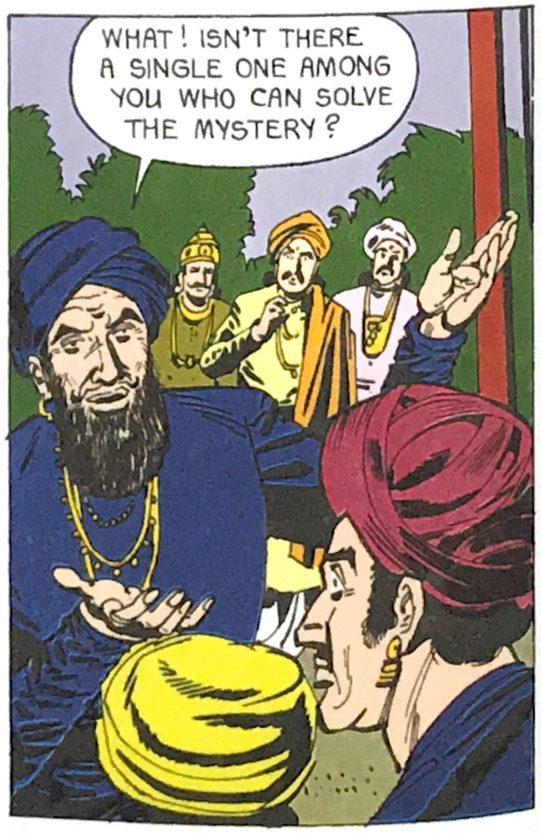
KAMALAPIDA, PARVATAK'S TRUSTED SPY, CAME TO PATALIPUTRA, BRINGING WITH HIM A LION IN A CAGE.

I CHALLENGE THE MEN OF MAGADHA TO SET THE LION FREE WITHOUT BREAKING OPEN THE CAGE.

THE PEOPLE OF PATALIPUTRA FLOCKED ROUND THE CAGE.
BUT THIS CAGE HAS NO DOOR!
HOW DID THE LION GET IN?

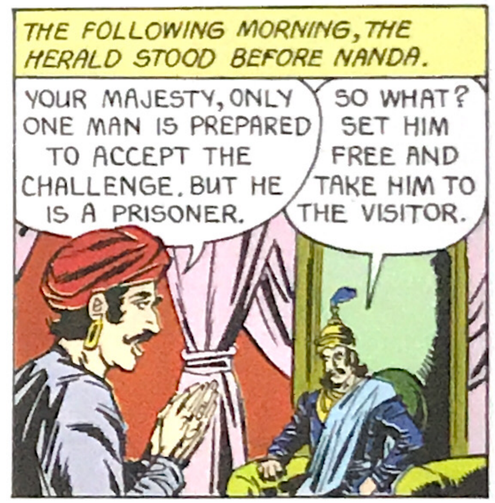
THE LION WAS BORN WITH THE CAGE AROUND IT.
HA! HA!
IMPOSSIBLE!

THEN HOW COULD IT ENTER THE CAGE WHICH HAS NO DOOR?


WHAT! ISN'T THERE A SINGLE ONE AMONG YOU WHO CAN SOLVE THE MYSTERY?

THE MATTER WAS REPORTED TO NANDA.
IT'S A SHAME THAT NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY. WHERE ARE THE WISE MEN OF PATALIPUTRA?

NANDA HAD A HERALD SENT ROUND THE CAPITAL.
GIVE EAR... ANYONE WHO CAN SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE LION AND UPHOLD THE HONOUR OF MAGADHA WILL BE REWARDED.


THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE HERALD STOOD BEFORE NANDA.
YOUR MAJESTY, ONLY ONE MAN IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE. BUT HE IS A PRISONER.
SO WHAT? SET HIM FREE AND TAKE HIM TO THE VISITOR.

THE PRISONER WHO WAS NONE OTHER THAN CHANDRAGUPTA WAS TAKEN TO KAMALAPIDA.
WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
HE MUST BE FROM PARVATA DESH.
I HAVE NO HOME. I LIVE IN CAVES, ON THE HILLS.

CHANDRAGUPTA HAD A GOOD LOOK AT THE LION.

WHEN THE GUARD BRANDISHES THE STAFF, THE LION JUMPS IN RAGE. STILL...

CHANDRAGUPTA HAD A BLINDFOLDED ELEPHANT BROUGHT AND PARADED BEFORE THE LION.

STRANGE! THE LION DOES NOT REACT. COULD IT BE A FAKE ONE?

NEXT, CHANDRAGUPTA HAD SOME MEAT BROUGHT FROM THE PALACE KITCHEN WHICH HE OFFERED TO THE LION.

WHY DOESN'T THE LION REACH FOR THE MEAT?

IT IS TRAINED NOT TO ACCEPT FOOD FROM STRANGERS. LET ME OFFER THE MEAT.

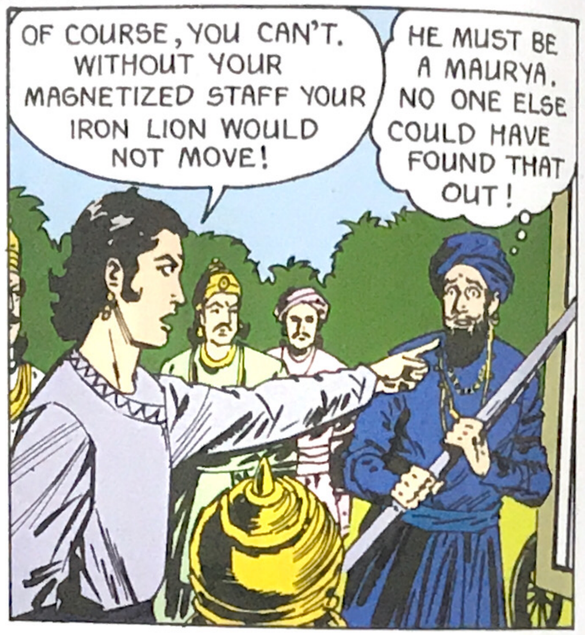
WHEN THE GUARD OFFERED THE MEAT, THE LION RUSHED FORWARD.

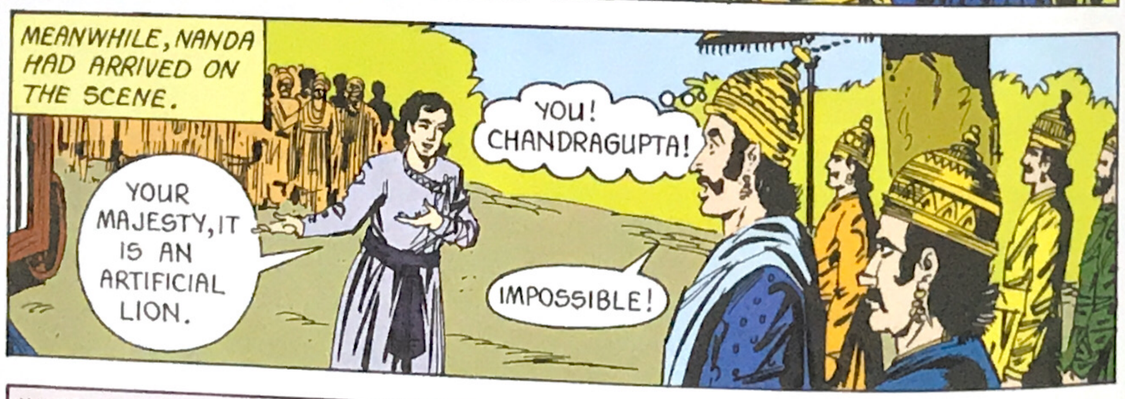
SEE?

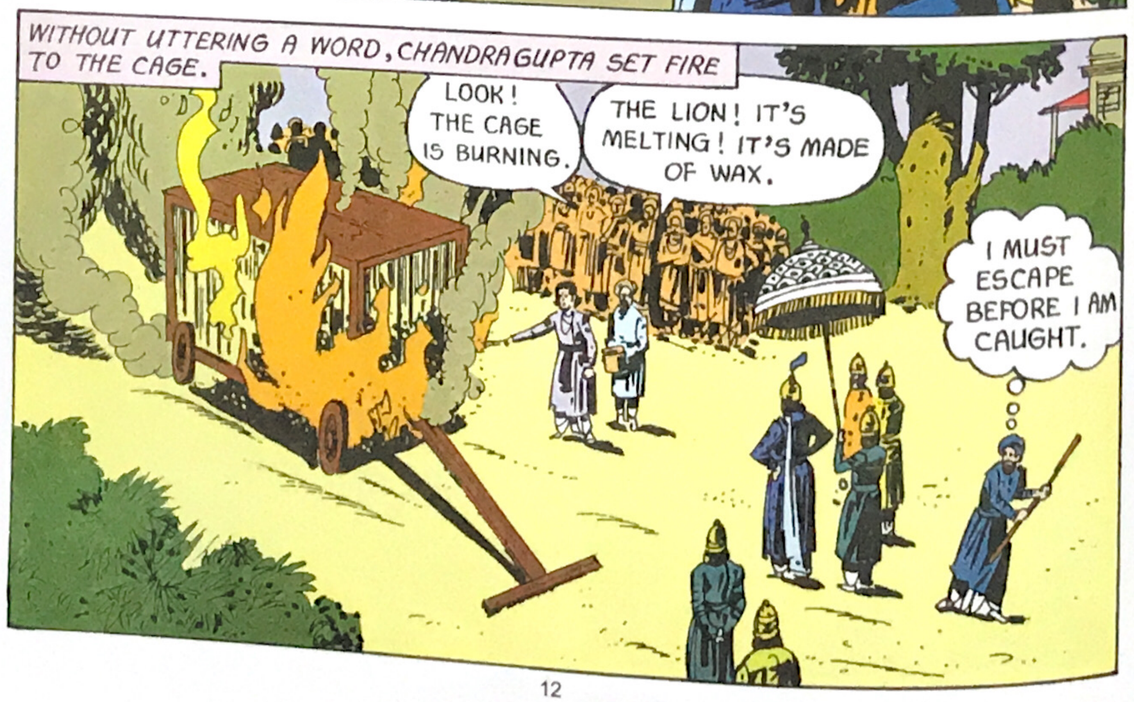
INDEED I DO!

ALL RIGHT. NOW PLEASE HAND OVER THE STAFF TO ME AND THEN OFFER THE MEAT TO THE LION!

I CANNOT PART WITH THE STAFF.

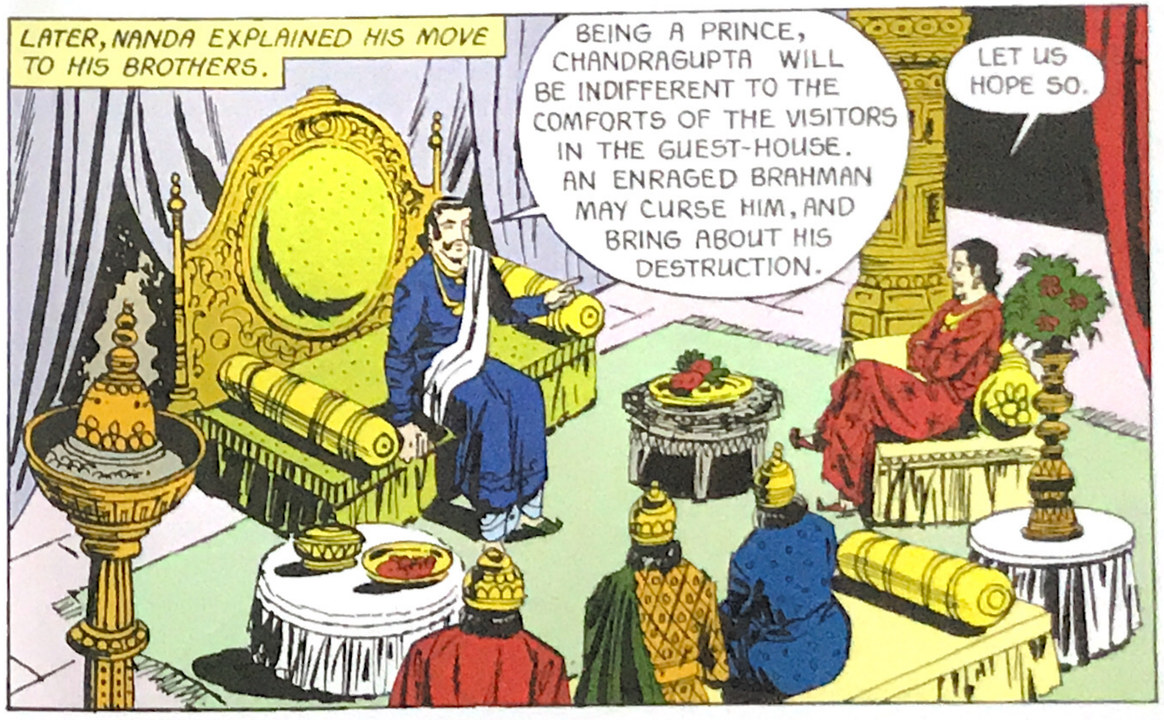

OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T. WITHOUT YOUR MAGNETIZED STAFF YOUR IRON LION WOULD NOT MOVE!
HE MUST BE A MAURYA. NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE FOUND THAT OUT!


MEANWHILE, NANDA HAD ARRIVED ON THE SCENE.
YOUR MAJESTY, IT IS AN ARTIFICIAL LION.
YOU! CHANDRAGUPTA!
IMPOSSIBLE!

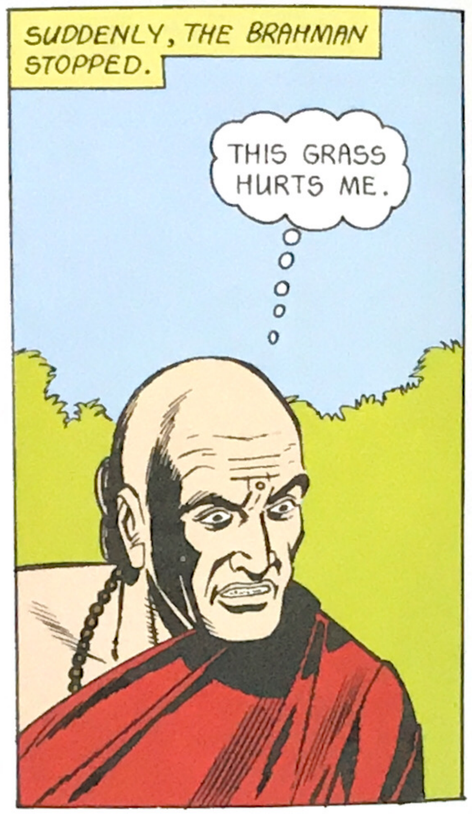

WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD, CHANDRAGUPTA SET FIRE TO THE CAGE.
LOOK! THE CAGE IS BURNING.
THE LION! IT'S MELTING! IT'S MADE OF WAX.
I MUST ESCAPE BEFORE I AM CAUGHT.

WHEN THE FIRE DIED DOWN—
YOUR MAJESTY! LOOK! THE IRON SKELETON OF THE LION! AS THE VISITOR WAVED THE MAGNETIZED STAFF. THE FAKE LION MOVED.
WHERE IS THAT VISITOR?
HE COULD NOT BE SEEN ANYWHERE.

NANDA TURNED TO CHANDRAGUPTA.
YOU HAVE SAVED THE HONOUR OF MAGADHA. WE ARE PLEASED TO RELEASE YOU FROM PRISON AND PLACE YOU IN CHARGE OF THE STATE GUEST-HOUSE.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.


LATER, NANDA EXPLAINED HIS MOVE TO HIS BROTHERS.
BEING A PRINCE, CHANDRAGUPTA WILL BE INDIFFERENT TO THE COMFORTS OF THE VISITORS IN THE GUEST-HOUSE. AN ENRAGED BRAHMAN MAY CURSE HIM, AND BRING ABOUT HIS DESTRUCTION.
LET US HOPE SO.

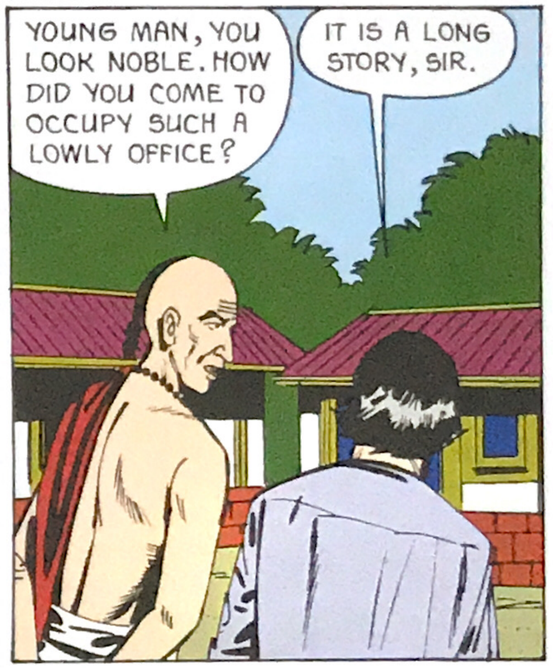
BUT NANDA WAS WRONG. CHANDRAGUPTA TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIS GUESTS. ONE AFTERNOON, HE SAW A BRAHMAN APPROACHING THE GUEST-HOUSE.


SUDDENLY, THE BRAHMAN STOPPED.
THIS GRASS HURTS ME.

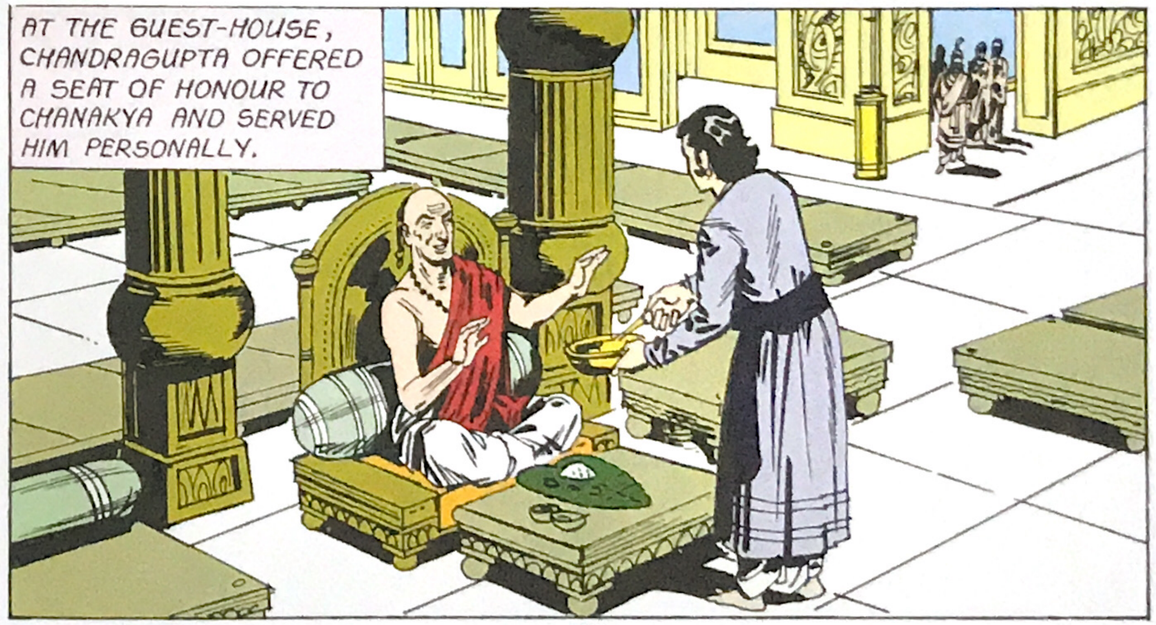
HE SAT DOWN TO PULL OUT THE GRASS...

...AND RESUMED HIS JOURNEY ONLY AFTER HE HAD UPROOTED ALL THE GRASS IN HIS PATH.
HE SEEMS TO BE A MAN OF DETERMINATION. HIS SUPPORT WOULD BE OF GREAT HELP TO ME.

HE RAN UP TO THE BRAHMAN.
REVERED ONE, PLEASE HAVE DINNER AT THE GUEST-HOUSE BEFORE YOU PROCEED.
IT IS VERY KIND OF YOU TO INVITE ME.


YOUNG MAN, YOU LOOK NOBLE. HOW DID YOU COME TO OCCUPY SUCH A LOWLY OFFICE?
IT IS A LONG STORY, SIR.

WHEN CHANDRAGUPTA TOLD HIM ALL—
DON'T WORRY, CHANDRAGUPTA. I, CHANAKYA, WILL HELP YOU AVENGE THE DEATH OF YOUR FATHER AND BROTHERS.


AT THE GUEST-HOUSE, CHANDRAGUPTA OFFERED A SEAT OF HONOUR TO CHANAKYA AND SERVED HIM PERSONALLY.

JUST THEN, THE NANDAS, WHO WERE RETURNING HOME AFTER A HUNT, HAPPENED TO COME THERE.

WHAT IMPUDENCE! A MAN IN RAGS OCCUPYING THE SEAT OF HONOUR! GET UP, YOU SCAMP!

CHANAKYA IGNORED THEM AND CONTINUED TO EAT.

DID YOU NOT HEAR US? HOW DARE YOU IGNORE US, YOU KNAVE!

WHEN NANDA PULLED HIM UP, CHANAKYA'S KNOTTED HAIR CAME LOOSE.

YOU REPROBATES! I WILL NOT TIE UP MY HAIR UNTIL YOU ARE DESTROYED! IF I FAIL, MY NAME IS NOT CHANAKYA.

AS CHANAKYA WALKED OUT, SEETHING WITH ANGER—

HA! HA! MIGHTY WORDS INDEED, FROM ONE SO PUNY!

THAT NIGHT, CHANDRAGUPTA SLIPPED OUT OF THE GUEST-HOUSE AND MET CHANAKYA.

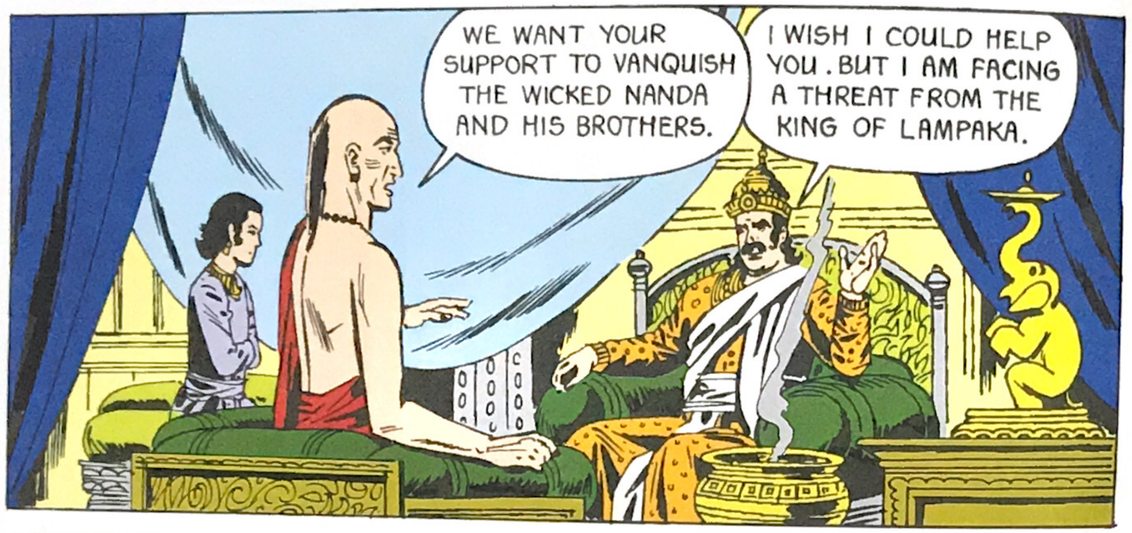
BEFORE WE PLAN OUR MOVES, I MUST KNOW WHO ARE NANDA'S FRIENDS AND WHO HIS FOES.

THE KING OF KASHI IS A STAUNCH FRIEND. PARVATAK IS HIS ENEMY.

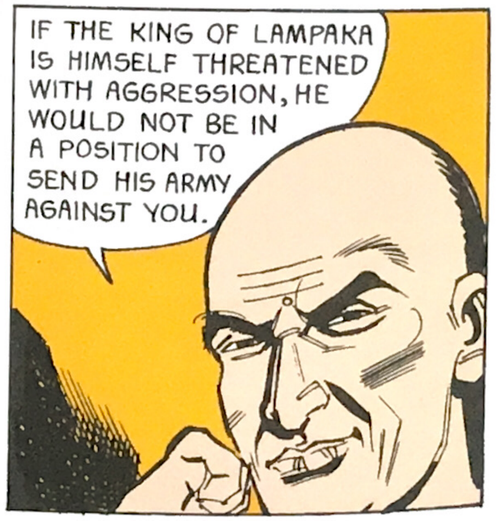
THEN LET US GO TO KING PARVATAK AND ENLIST HIS SUPPORT.

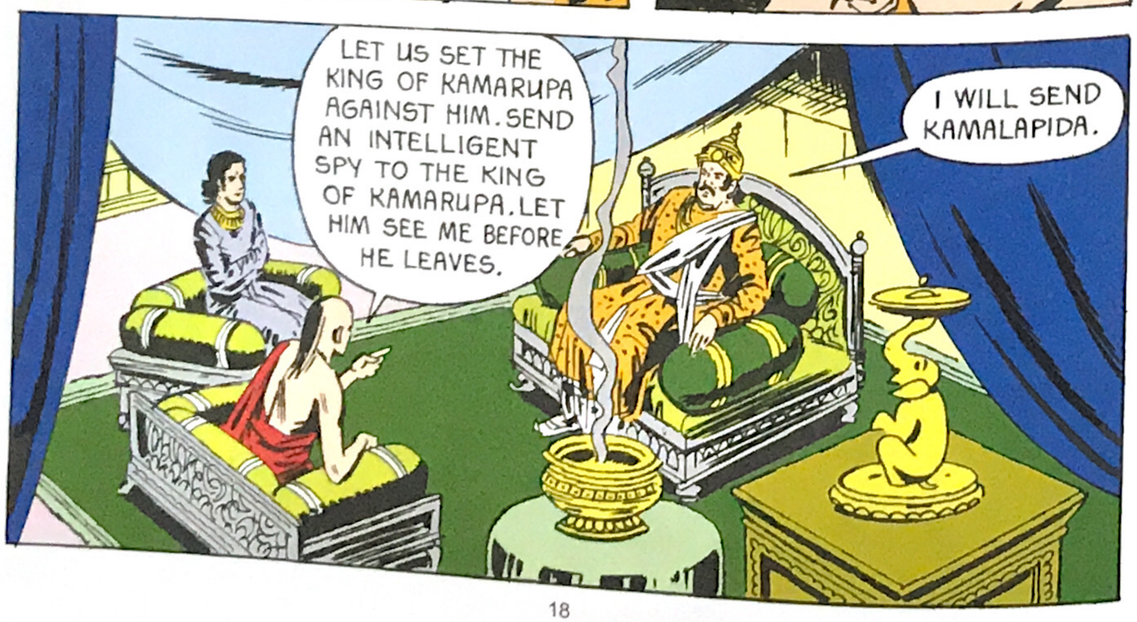
WHEN THEY CALLED ON PARVATAK AT HIS CAPITAL, THEY RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, O REVERED CHANAKYA?


WE WANT YOUR SUPPORT TO VANQUISH THE WICKED NANDA AND HIS BROTHERS.
I WISH I COULD HELP YOU. BUT I AM FACING A THREAT FROM THE KING OF LAMPAKA.

IF THE THREAT FROM LAMPAKA IS TAKEN CARE OF?
THEN MY ARMY WILL BE AT THE DISPOSAL OF CHANDRAGUPTA.


IF THE KING OF LAMPAKA IS HIMSELF THREATENED WITH AGGRESSION, HE WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO SEND HIS ARMY AGAINST YOU.


LET US SET THE KING OF KAMARUPA AGAINST HIM. SEND AN INTELLIGENT SPY TO THE KING OF KAMARUPA. LET HIM SEE ME BEFORE HE LEAVES.
I WILL SEND KAMALAPIDA.

INSTRUCTED BY CHANAKYA, KAMALAPIDA AND HIS COMPANION LEFT FOR THE KINGDOM OF KAMARUPA. WHEN THEY REACHED THE GARDEN AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL—
WAIT HERE, AND COME TO THE ROYAL COURT AFTER SOME TIME. AND DON'T FORGET CHANAKYA'S INSTRUCTIONS.
I WON'T, KAMALAPIDA.

KAMALAPIDA SOON REACHED THE COURT OF THE KING OF KAMARUPA.
YOUR MAJESTY, I'VE BROUGHT A PROPOSAL FROM OUR KING, PARVATAK. HE REQUESTS YOU TO GIVE YOUR PRINCESS IN MARRIAGE TO OUR PRINCE, MALAYAKETU.

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE THIS PROPOSAL. WE WILL...

JUST THEN, KAMALAPIDA'S COMPANION ENTERED.
EXCUSE ME, YOUR MAJESTY. I HAVE AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR KAMALAPIDA, THE ENVOY OF KING PARVATAK.

WHEN KAMALAPIDA READ THE MESSAGE, HE TURNED PALE.

WHAT'S THE MATTER? NO BAD NEWS, I HOPE.

YOUR MAJESTY, IT IS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL. HE WANTS... NO! I CAN'T. PARDON ME.

OVERCOME BY CURIOSITY, THE KING ORDERED HIS MINISTER TO TAKE THE LETTER FROM KAMALAPIDA AND READ IT ALOUD.

...IT IS REPORTED THAT THE KING OF LAMPAKA OPENLY CALLED THE LORD OF KAMARUPA A MAN OF LOW ORIGIN SINCE ONE OF HIS ANCESTORS HAD MARRIED A COMMONER...

...I HOLD THE LORD OF KAMARUPA IN HIGH ESTEEM; AND YET, IN THE LIGHT OF THE REMARKS MADE BY THE KING OF LAMPAKA...

ENOUGH! THAT WRETCH WILL PAY FOR HIS MALICIOUS AND DEFAMATORY REMARKS.

THEN HE TURNED TO KAMALAPIDA.

GO BACK TO YOUR LORD AND TELL HIM THAT I WILL RESPOND TO HIS PROPOSAL ONLY AFTER THE KING OF LAMPAKA IS VANQUISHED.

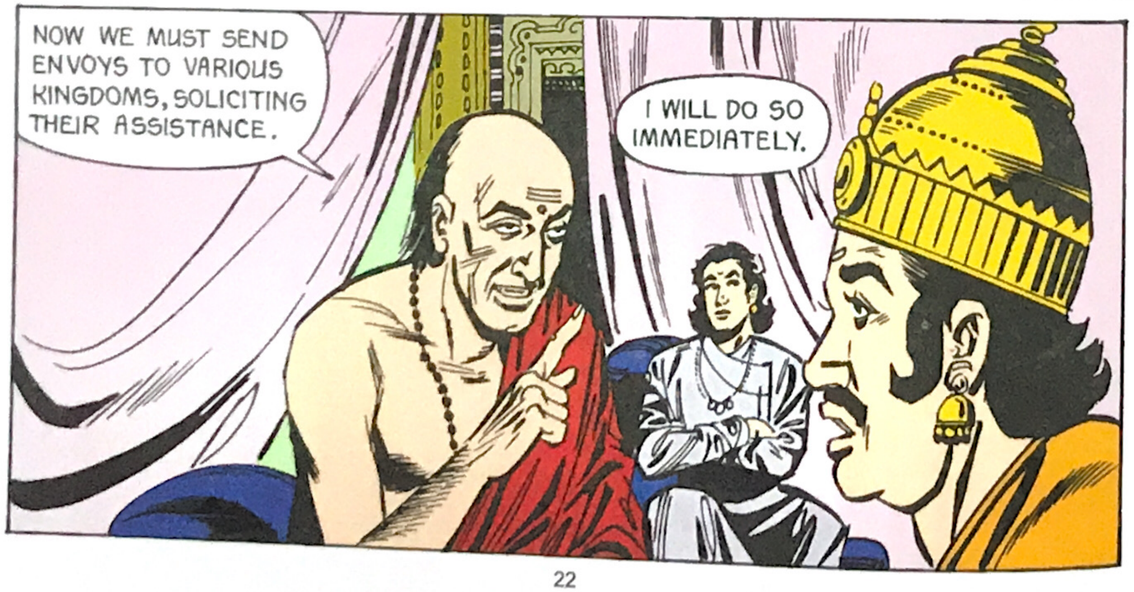
AS KAMALAPIDA AND HIS COMPANION LEFT FOR THEIR KINGDOM, THEY SAW KAMARUPA'S ARMY MARCHING TOWARDS THE KINGDOM OF LAMPAKA.

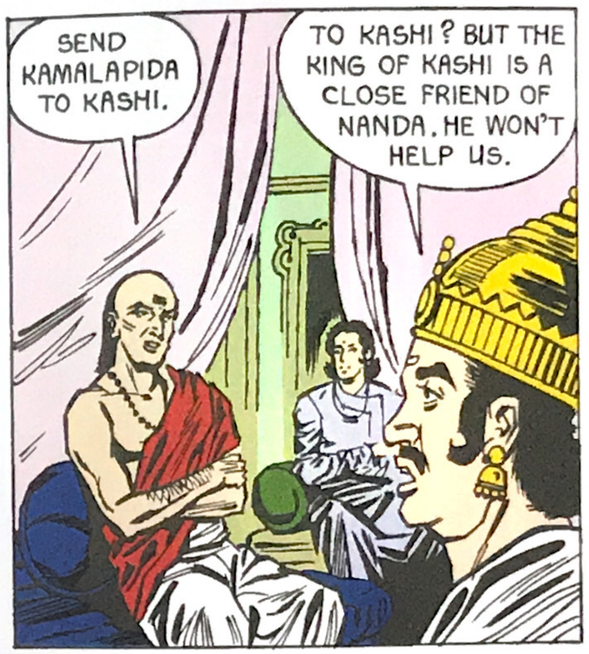
CHANAKYA'S PLAN HAS SUCCEEDED! THE KING OF LAMPAKA WILL BE KEPT BUSY.

WHEN PARVATAK HEARD THE NEWS, HE WAS JUBILANT.
CHANAKYA HAS GOT RID OF MY ENEMIES WITHOUT RESORTING TO ARMS.
YOUR MAJESTY, CHANAKYA CAN BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF NANDA IN A SIMILAR WAY.

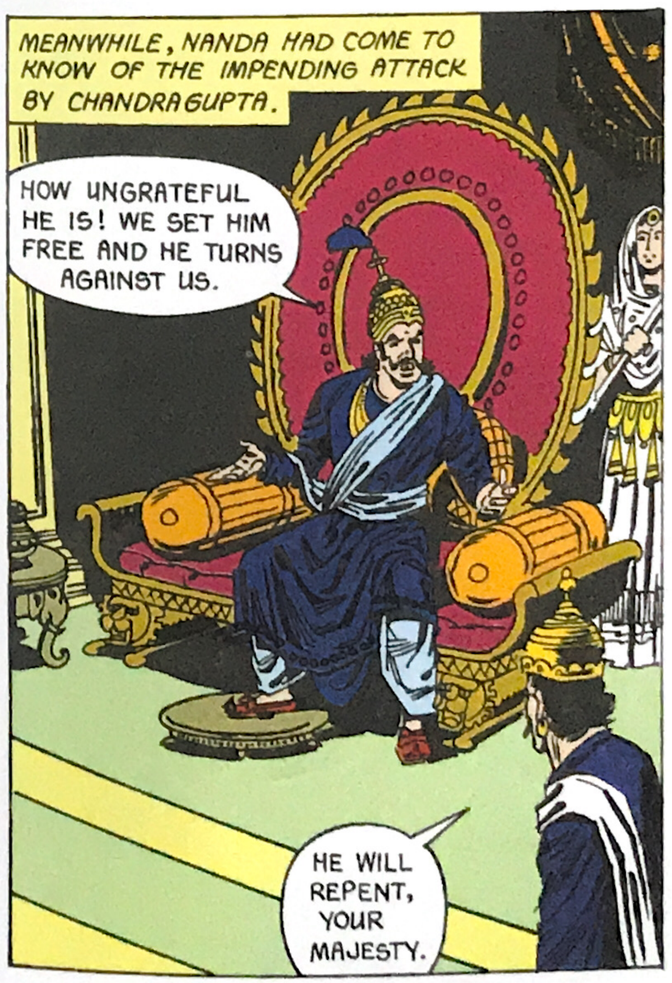
YES. HE NEED NOT DEPEND UPON US. HE HAS ASKED FOR OUR HELP ONLY TO HONOUR US.

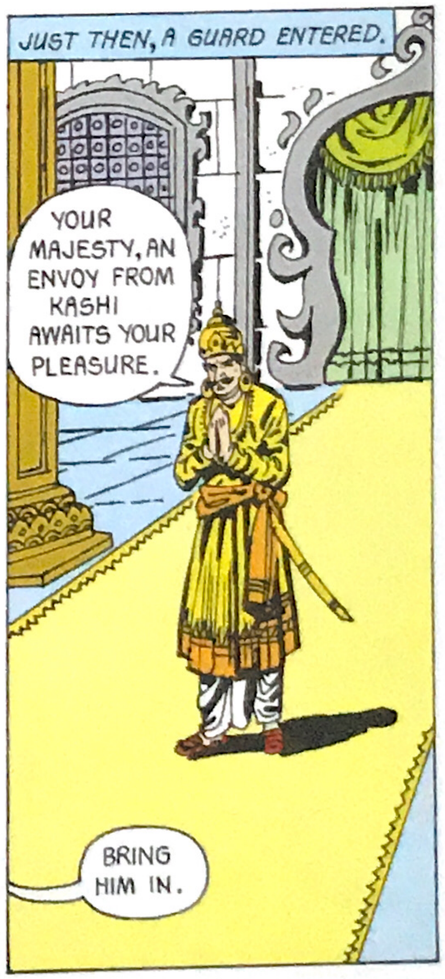
LATER, WHEN CHANDRAGUPTA AND CHANAKYA CALLED ON HIM—
HOLY ONE, MY ARMY IS AT THE DISPOSAL OF CHANDRAGUPTA.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.


NOW WE MUST SEND ENVOYS TO VARIOUS KINGDOMS, SOLICITING THEIR ASSISTANCE.
I WILL DO SO IMMEDIATELY.


SEND KAMALAPIDA TO KASHI.
TO KASHI? BUT THE KING OF KASHI IS A CLOSE FRIEND OF NANDA. HE WON'T HELP US.

PLEASE DO AS I SAY.
AS YOU WISH.


MEANWHILE, NANDA HAD COME TO KNOW OF THE IMPENDING ATTACK BY CHANDRAGUPTA.
HOW UNGRATEFUL HE IS! WE SET HIM FREE AND HE TURNS AGAINST US.
HE WILL REPENT, YOUR MAJESTY.


JUST THEN, A GUARD ENTERED.
YOUR MAJESTY, AN ENVOY FROM KASHI AWAITS YOUR PLEASURE.
BRING HIM IN.

THE ENVOY ENTERED AND BOWED TO NANDA.

YOUR MAJESTY, CHANDRAGUPTA AND PARVATAK HAVE SOLICITED OUR HELP IN THEIR WAR AGAINST YOU.

DON'T THEY KNOW YOUR KING IS A TRUSTED FRIEND OF OURS?

OBVIOUSLY THEY DON'T, YOUR MAJESTY. THAT'S WHY OUR KING WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER YOU COULD USE THEIR IGNORANCE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE.

COULD WE, RAKSHASA?

RAKSHASA, THE PRIME MINISTER, WAS THOUGHTFUL FOR A MOMENT. THEN—

LET YOUR KING PRETEND FRIENDSHIP WITH CHANDRAGUPTA AND JOIN HIM WITH HIS ARMY...

...AND WHEN A SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF, LET HIM EITHER KILL CHANDRAGUPTA OR CAPTURE HIM OR PARVATAK'S SON, MALAYAKETU.

A GOOD IDEA!

I WILL CONVEY YOUR MESSAGE TO OUR KING.

AND THE ENVOY LEFT FOR KASHI.

BRIEFED BY RAKSHASA, THE KING OF KASHI SENT FOR KAMALAPIDA.

AFTER GIVING THE MATTER DUE THOUGHT, WE HAVE DECIDED TO SIDE WITH CHANDRAGUPTA. OUR ARMY WILL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.

CHANAKYA'S PREDICTION HAS COME TRUE.

NOT IMMEDIATELY, YOUR MAJESTY. CHANDRAGUPTA OR MALAYAKETU WILL COME AND TAKE YOU TO PATALIPUTRA. TILL THEN, PLEASE WAIT.

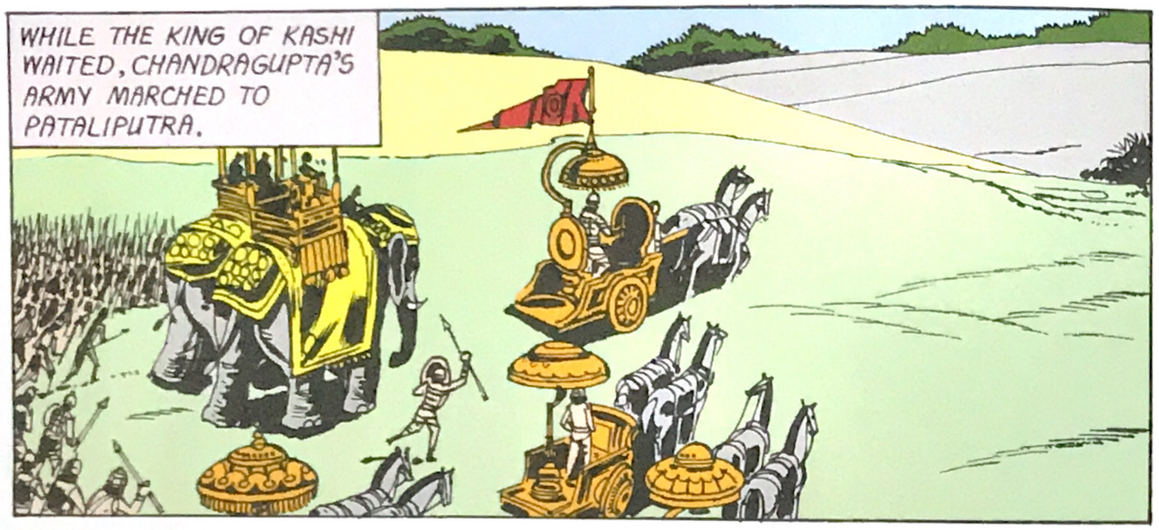
AND YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT IN VAIN. CHANAKYA IS BRILLIANT.

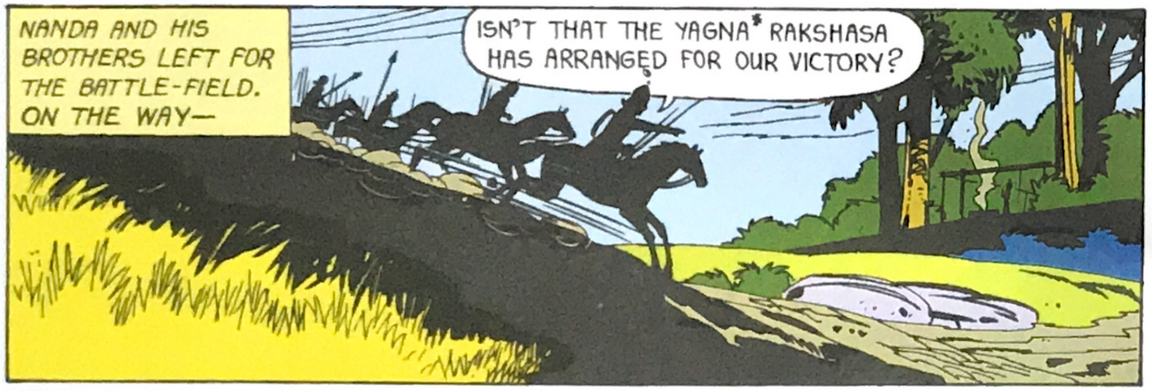
YES. I'LL WAIT —WAIT FOR THEM TO WALK INTO MY TRAP.

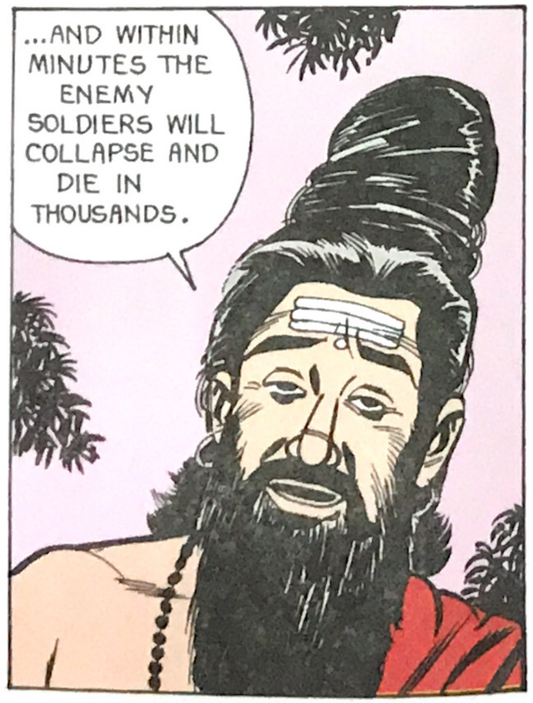
EVERY DAY HE WOULD QUESTION KAMALAPIDA.

WHEN IS CHANDRAGUPTA COMING? OR WILL IT BE MALAYAKETU?

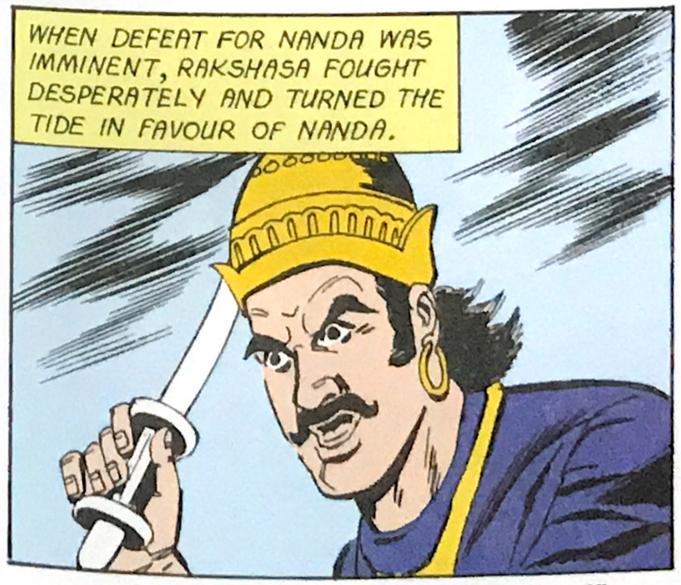
ONE OF THEM SHOULD BE HERE ANY MOMENT, YOUR MAJESTY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S KEEPING THEM.

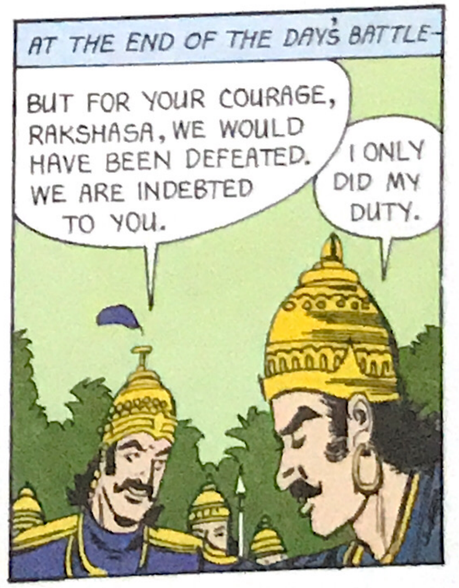






* FIRE-SACRIFICE





OUR ALLY, THE KING OF KASHI, WILL BE DELIVERING CHANDRAGUPTA TO US ANY MOMENT.

WE ARE SURE THAT YOUR PLAN WILL WORK.

THAT NIGHT, NANDA SLEPT PEACEFULLY.

AT MIDNIGHT, HE WAS WOKEN UP BY THE DISCIPLES OF MASOPAVASI.

THE FINAL OFFERING WILL BE MADE SHORTLY.

WE'LL START IMMEDIATELY.

NANDA AND HIS BROTHERS LEFT FOR THE SACRIFICIAL SITE. WHEN THEY REACHED THE PLACE—

YOUR MAJESTY, THE KING OF KASHI HAS CAPTURED MALAYAKETU AND HAS SENT HIM HERE UNDER ARMED ESCORT. SHALL WE OPEN THE GATE OF THE FORT TO ADMIT THEM?

WITHOUT A MOMENT'S DELAY!

AFTER SOME TIME—

VICTORY TO THE NANDAS! VICTORY TO THE KING OF KASHI.

AH! HERE COMES MALAYAKETU.

THE PROCESSION REACHED THE SITE OF THE SACRIFICE.

MALAYAKETU, YOU HAVE FALLEN INTO THE TRAP SET BY US. DIDN'T YOU KNOW THAT THE KING OF KASHI IS OUR ALLY?

HAD I REALISED IT, I WOULDN'T HAVE GONE THERE TO RECEIVE HIM.

MALAYAKETU, YOUR FATHER LOVES YOU DEARLY. WE'LL RELEASE YOU ONLY WHEN HE SURRENDERS CHANDRAGUPTA TO US.

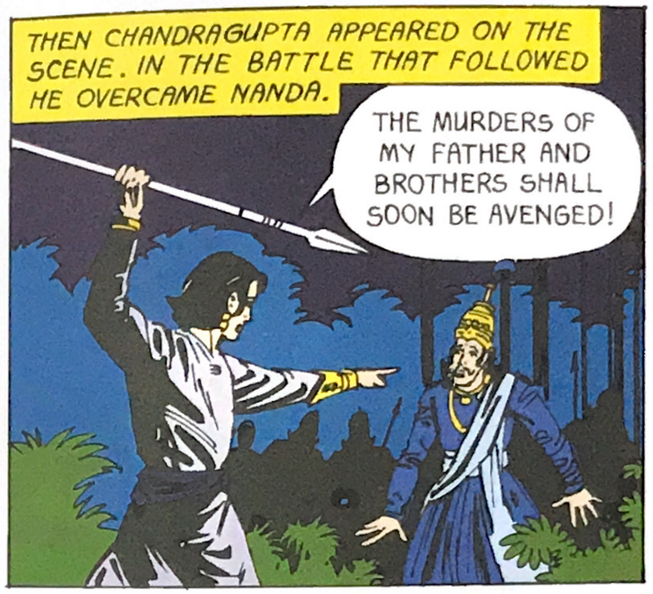
HE WILL NEVER DO IT.

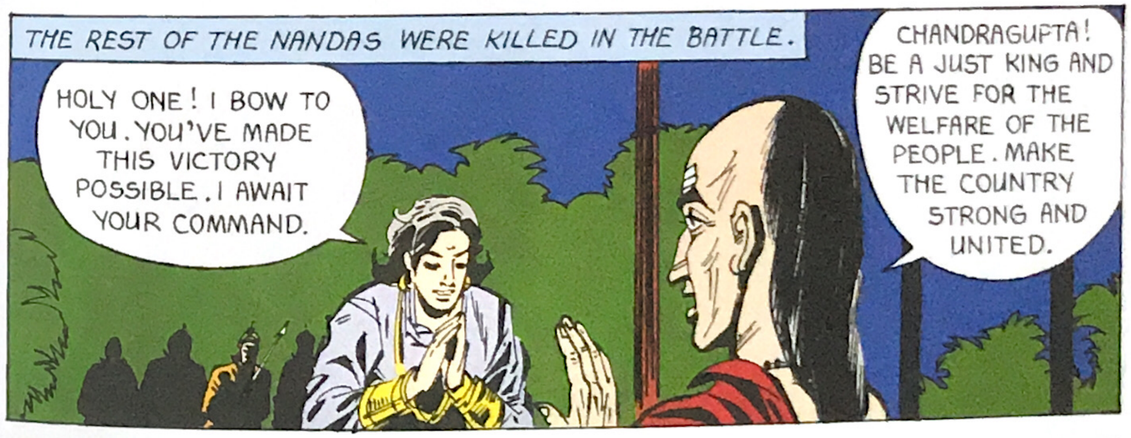
HE WILL. WHY DON'T YOU COME OUT OF THE PALANQUIN AND SPEAK? ARE YOU SHY?

THE NEXT MOMENT—
IT IS NOT MALAYAKETU. WE'VE BEEN DUPED!

THE SOLDIERS WHO HAD BROUGHT THE FAKE MALAYAKETU, FELL UPON NANDA AND HIS MEN.
THESE ARE CHANDRAGUPTA'S SOLDIERS IN DISGUISE! OH, GOD!

JUST THEN, MASOPAVASI WHO WAS NONE OTHER THAN CHANAKYA'S OWN MAN, SET FIRE TO THE SACRIFICIAL SITE.
YES. THE TIME FOR THE FINAL OFFERING— THE HEADS OF THE NANDAS — HAS ARRIVED.


THEN CHANDRAGUPTA APPEARED ON THE SCENE. IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED HE OVERCAME NANDA.
THE MURDERS OF MY FATHER AND BROTHERS SHALL SOON BE AVENGED!


THE REST OF THE NANDAS WERE KILLED IN THE BATTLE.
HOLY ONE! I BOW TO YOU. YOU'VE MADE THIS VICTORY POSSIBLE. I AWAIT YOUR COMMAND.
CHANDRAGUPTA! BE A JUST KING AND STRIVE FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE. MAKE THE COUNTRY STRONG AND UNITED.

AND CHANAKYA TIED UP HIS TUFT. IT WAS DAWN BY THEN. CHANDRAGUPTA ENTERED PATALIPUTRA IN TRIUMPH.
VICTORY TO CHANDRAGUPTA!
WELCOME HOME, CHANDRAGUPTA!